

**Series: God Saves #1400**

**Title: Romans 8.29a**

**Proginosko, Part 3**

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. As we get going today I would like to remind you that we are in just the first part of verse 29 in Romans chapter 8. Here we read about the first move God makes in the order of our salvation or the first link God creates in the golden chain of salvation. The word of great interest to us is foreknowledge. Let me read this part of the verse, **“For those whom [God] foreknew, [God] also predestined...”** God foreknew. Foreknew is this form of the word foreknowledge. Earlier this week we saw in the Bible that God is all-knowing. He is omniscient. And we talked about this aspect to the nature and character of the Living God.

To this we add the discussion on the meaning specifically of God’s foreknowledge. The Greek word is *proginosko*. We then left Romans 8 for other New Testament texts which use this word. And we found that two times this word is used elsewhere in regards to the man Paul. And four times this word is used elsewhere in regards to God. (So a total of five times in the New Testament we read about God’s foreknowledge.) And the first of those other instances is in Acts chapter 2, and verse 23. Now, *when* this word *proginosko* is used in relation to a man all it means is previous knowledge based on circumstances. So, in Acts and in 2 Peter, we saw that the Jews and the Christians had previous knowledge of the Apostle Paul. They knew him beforehand.

*However*, (and you hear in my voice that I am about to stress what I say next) *however*, when this same word is used in relation to God it means more than God possessing previous knowledge. It means God possesses a predetermined plan to do something; God foreordained something that will come to pass in the future (He planned it before it happens). He does not just know about it before it happens. He plans for it to happen. He makes it happen. And this is what God does with our salvation. He predetermines who will be saved long before we actually invest our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And in Acts 2, verse 23 that we have been working on the last few days, we have a prime example of *proginosko* as applied to God. As I have made plain, the grammar in the Greek language reveals what our theology either is or should be regarding the foreknowledge or foreordination of the Lord. It is to our grammar lesson we now return.

To do what I want to do as effectively as possible requires me to lay out the words of this verse that interest us, in both English and Greek. The English reads, “the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God...” In the Greek language and grammar, that first word “the” (T-H-E) is an article. The second word “predetermined” is a verb. The third word “plan” is a noun. The fourth word “and” is a conjunction. And the fifth word “foreknowledge” is also a noun. It is the second noun in this part of the sentence. “Plan” and “foreknowledge” are both nouns. And they are both nouns in the same case.

To which you might say (most people will say), “Who cares?” It is Friday. The weekend is about to begin. Maybe you are about to go into work, but you have a kind of light day. Maybe you have already been to work and you’re off to enjoy a weekend of rest and relaxation. You are about to have a grand time and, for me, this is now grammar time? How *boring!* Best to turn the dial on your radio or delete this podcast. (You are wondering when we will get back to Jesus in the Gospels, as I promised on Tuesday.) Well, can I be so bold as to say it this way: *you better care!* If you care about God, if you care about yourself and others, then you will care about this.

Here's why: the Greek language and grammar tells us what to believe about God’s act of saving us from sin. If you accept that amazing grace is so sweet a sound, because it saved a wretch like you, then beloved, this needs to interest you. So, just give me a few more minutes and then we’re off to whatever the weekend holds. And to get back into the grammar let me introduce you to a man by the name of Granville Sharp. *Who?* This is Mr. Granville Sharp. Born in 1735 and died in 1813. He was British and a key campaigner against slavery. He was also a grammarian in biblical Greek.

He strongly believed in the deity of Christ and so he studied hard the New Testament in the original language so that he could prove that Jesus was indeed God. And, as part of his work in the language, he developed a rule. We call it the Granville Sharp's Rule. And that rule is applied to what we have read in Acts 2, verse 23. Let's see it, using the description of our other scholar-friend Kenneth S. Wuest.

"When two nouns are in the same case, connected by [the conjunction "and,"] the first noun is preceded by the article and the second noun is without the article, the rule states that in this construction the second noun refers to the same thing to which the first noun does, and is a further description of it. That means that *boule* ("plan") and *proginosko* ("foreknowledge") refer to the same thing (*Wuest's Word Studies: Romans in the Greek New Testament for the English Reader*, 143-144)." And that same thing is this: God's choice of Jesus Christ to be the Savior for sinners.

Therefore, the word *proginosko* here means more than mere previous knowledge. Yes, God obviously, because He is all-knowing knew that Jesus Christ is Savior. God knows that because God knows all. But it is more: *God foreordained, God pre-planned, God had the predetermined plan, the determinate counsel* to cause Christ's sacrifice for sin *long before* Jesus actually lived, and died, and was resurrected from the dead. And when did God exercise this foreknowledge? When did He foreordain? When did He pre-plan? When did God determine the plan? He did so from *before the foundation of the world*. That is, before God did anything else, He did this. He made Jesus our Savior.

In this text, the word "foreknowledge" means the same thing as "predetermined plan." *proginosko* partakes of the nature of *boule*. I admit, this is technical. So, let me try to land this plan again on the runway of your mind. Am I clear for the landing? Good. Thank you. Here I come. I will use the English, "the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God..."

"The" is the article attached to the first noun "plan." "Predetermined" is the verb. "Plan" is the first noun. "And" is the conjunction. "Foreknowledge" is the second noun. The rule then states, when the two nouns are in the same case (as plan and foreknowledge are) and they are connected with the conjunction "and," which these are, and the first noun is preceded by the article (which it is..."the" precedes "plan"), and the second noun is without the article (which it is...there is no "the" before foreknowledge), then the second noun refers to the same thing to which the first noun does, and is a further description of it. That means that *boule* ("plan") and *proginosko* ("foreknowledge") refer to the same thing.

In other words, God's predetermined plan is in the foreknowledge of God. Or, we can say, the foreknowledge of God includes His predetermined plan. And this plan is for His Son Jesus to be the Savior. Before the foundation of this world, God chose Jesus to be our Savior from sin. God foreknows. As Romans 8.29 says, "God foreknew..."

Well, we are going to come back to this next week. But fear not, we will move on from the technical Greek grammar lessons. Having said that, what we have just done is a crucial and necessary step in understanding who God is. And we need the language to tell us about God. The Bible is the written Word and God chose to write to us, therefore He expects us to study, showing ourselves approved, unto Him. This takes *work*. By God's grace, I pray I have made this understandable.

Can I encourage you to listen to this again? And to take some notes. I remind you this is available *right now* as a podcast complete with my manuscript – everything I have just said written down for you. Visit [godisministry.org](http://godisministry.org), that's [godisministry.o-r-g](http://godisministry.o-r-g) online and this podcast will be right at the top of the homepage. And you will see a link "read along." Click that link to download and read along on my script as you listen. See if that helps you learn and apply what Granville Sharp has taught us. And join us on Monday because God Is.

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